The Caſe of the Printery at Finsbury, concerning Printing of the Bible, truely ſtated.

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WHereas the *holy Bible*, (being the revealed Word of God,) is the pure *fountain* of true *Religion*, ſo it hath been conſtantly defended by no other Pa tronage in *England*, than of the Supream Magiſtrates, and Authorities thereof, ever ſince the firſt Renunciation of the *Popes* Supremacy in *H.* 8 time, and the bleſſed Reformation of Religion by *Ed.* 6. and *Q. Eliz.* The primitive Tranſlation whereof into Engliſh was made in *H.* 8. time Which being reviſed afterwards in the Reign of *E.* 6. was appointed to be printed only *cum privilegio Regali*; being the Nationall and commo Evidence of our Religion; and ſuch a ſacred Book, and of that Univerſall concernment, and honorable eſtimation, that it cannot properl and politically be printed or divulged under any other inferiour Title, than of the Royall and Supream Authority it ſelf, in any Dominio whatſoever.

In *Q. Eliz.* time (*propter emendatiorem verborum proprietatem*) another Review was made of the Bible, and the printing thereof (*inter alia*) granted b *Patent* 8. *Auguſt.* 31° *Eliz.* to *Chriſtopher Barker* for his life: which was alſo renewed and confirmed to him, 10. *Maii* 1. *Jac.* After which, a ne Tranſlation, (publiſhed in 1611.) was made by that Kings ſpeciall command; The charges whereof (as it is probable) were ſolely defrayed by *Chriſtopher Barker*. Fo a full compenſation whereof the King 11. *Febr.* 14. of his reign, did royally grant alſo to *Robert Barker* (after *Chriſtopher*'s death,) the ſole Liberty to print Bibles (*int alia*) for his life; and to his Aſſigns for 30. years in reverſion, the ſame being a moſt noble and Prince-like Conceſſion, and Remuneration.

All which Patents and the benefit thereof were afterwards, in conſideration of a valuable ſumme of money, aſſigned by *Barker* to *Benham Norton*, and *John Bill*; wh with their Aſſigns enjoyed the priviledge thereof, till the Grants and Limitations of the Patents, were either forfeited to the State by default of the Patentees, or expir in time about the year 1643. And ſo the Authority of printing Bibles reverted to the State, as their abſolute, and originall Right to order and direct the ſame for t future.

However, not onely the Orthography of that laſt Tranſlation, but alſo the propriety of many Texts, being impeached by ſeverall learned men, to be different from t Original Tongues, a Reviſe was made at *Cambridge*, in 1628. *Mandato regio*, and upon ſolemn debate at the Council-table, and an Edition thereof in *Folio*, publiſhed a printed in 1629. by the Univerſity Printers, with very much correction and amendment; But the moſt exact and authentick Edition printed there, was ſet forth in *Fo* in 1638. being various from the *London* Bibles in many Thouſand places of the Text, beſides the Addition of above 500. Parallel-places of the Old and New Teſtament the Margin, with generall approbation of our Orthodox Divines. In honour whereof the Bibles and Teſtaments printed ſince at *London*, or *Cambridge* have been chiefly not altogether, corrected and reviſed thereby.

In 1643. Bible-printing ceaſing at *London* by the abſence of the late Kings Printers, and the prices of the Books being advanced to very dear rates, to the great diſcomm dity of the Common-wealth, the Dutch thereupon printed in, and imported from *Holland* great numbers of Engliſh Bibles, ſelling them for cheaper prices; but ſo c ruptly and blaſphemouſly printed, that upon report of three faults therein only, made to the Parliament by the Aſſembly of Divines, the Books were then ſeized, and pu lickly burnt; and the future Importation of Engliſh Bibles, (for due encouragement of our own native Printers,) prohibited with greater ſeverity, than by any form Statutes or Proviſions, by Order of the Lords and Commons 14. *Jun.* 1643.

For remedy of which Inconvenience, and better ſupply of the Common-wealth, the ſaid Aſſembly by direction of the Parliament, treated with divers of the m eminent Stationers of *London*, to undertake the future printing of Bibles and Pſalmes at moderate rates; who alledging they could not vend them under 4ˢ. 6ᵈ. *per* b in quires, declined that honourable work: Whereupon they engaged *William Bentley* Printer, and his Partners to erect their Printery at *Finsbury* for that ſervice; wh they printed five conſiderable Impreſſions of Bibles (corrected by the *Cambridge*-Bible only) in 1646.48, *&c.* affording them with Pſalms at farre cheaper rates than forme they were ſold, and furniſhing the Army, by ſpeciall Order of the State, as appears by the Title-pages, upon their Advances to *Ireland* and *Scotland* in 1649. and 50. w 9000. Bibles (with References) and Pſalmes in 8°. (part bound in leather, and part in quires,) for leſſe than 2ˢ. *per* book.

In the Act of 20. *Sept.* 1649. for the better regulating of Printing in generall, and encouragement of *Bentley* and his Partners, there is an expreſſe and explicite Prov made by way of exception of the Printing-preſſe in *Finsbury*, then and now uſed for printing of Bibles and Pſalms, from all the reſtrictions and clauſes of that Act, a it had never been had or made; Which being but temporary, was revived and continues in force by the Act of 7. *Jan.* 1652. Before the paſſing whereof, *Robert Barker* younger put in a ſpeciall Proviſo for the ſole printing of the Bible, upon pretence of having the tranſlated Copy thereof (made in 1611.) in his hands; which was t read and debated, and being put to the Queſtion, was (after the reading of *Bentley*'s Petition to preſerve his priviledge) caſt out with a Negative vote; the Parliament terly rejecting the deſign of ſuch a Monopoly.

Barker being thus diſappointed in his Project, procured afterwards a pretended, ſuperannuated Licencers hand, to warrant and authorize that Copy, as if it were a p vate Copy of ſome particular mans works, and thereupon attempted to enter it under that qualification in the Regiſter-book of the Company of Stationers, according a formall uſage amongſt them for other books, and by pretence of a Clauſe for due Entries of ſuch common books in the Act of 20. *Sept.* 1649. But his late Highneſſe Warrant, ſigned by Mr. Secretary *Thurloe*, 22. *Martii* 1654. inhibited the Maſter and Wardens of that Company from admitting thereof, upon juſt ground of ſecuring Right of the Common-wealth, claimed by his Highneſſe in the Bible.

Then *Barker*, by the mediation of Mr. *Marchamont Needham*, ſold the ſeverall Tomes of K. *James*'s tranſlation to *Henry Hills* and *John Field* Printers, by ſuppoſitio an abſolute and private title and Intereſt therein; (when as in truth they were but concredited to his father in K. *James*'s time, in order to the firſt compoſing and print thereof by the King's priviledge, and never afterwards regarded other then as looſe ſheets, blurred and defaced, till they were paſted and collected together by Mr. *R Norton*, and by ſome caſualty hapned into *Barkers* poſſeſſion out of his hands:) And then in *Febr.* 1655. *Hills* and *Field* inſinuated to make an Entrance alſo in that Regi thereof, as their private Copy; but were denyed upon admiſſion of ſeverall Caveats of *Bentley*, and others put in againſt them, upon juſt and legall grounds. Where on (notwithſtanding the former proceedings of Parliament, the Interdiction of his Highneſſe, the ſaid Caveats never decided, and the common Cuſtome of the Stat ners Company to the contrary,) a Warrant dated 4. *Martii* 1655. ſigned in his Highneſs's name by Mr. Secretary *Thurloe*, was directed to the ſaid Maſter and Ward taking off the ſaid Reſtraint, and commanding them duly to enter for *Hills* and *Field* that Copy, being in their actual poſſeſſion, as the lawfull owners thereof: Upon wh they demurred, and drew up reaſons for prevention thereof. But being threatned with Impriſonment, and upon receipt of another Warrant, dated 6. *Martii* follow (procured under his Highneſſes Privy Signet) to the ſame effect, an Entry was poſitively made accordingly; Whereby the Bible hath been ever ſince, and ſtill is, n irrationally and by uſurpation, claimed by *Hills* and *Field*, as their private and peculiar Copy; which to none of the *Barkers* was ever permitted, nor any of them da ſingularly to challenge in the late Kings reigns. From whence it may be well inferred, that his Highneſſe and the Secretary were ſurprized, and abuſed in the ſubſtance circumſtance of the buſineſſe; but however the Common-wealth in generall, and *Bentley*, and many others in particular have been notoriouſly injured, and oppreſſed ſince; as ſhall plainly be demonſtrated.

For that *Hills* and *Field* 7. *Martii* 1655. by pretext of Deputations from Sir *John Barkſtead* and Mr. *Foxcroft*, giving them power onely to ſearch for ſcandalous and u cenſed newes-Books and Pamphlets againſt the State, did not onely ſuppreſſe all others then commonly engaged in printing Bibles and Teſtaments; but contrary to expreſſe purport of their Deputations and Judgements of thoſe Commiſſioners, (which they have ſince 28. *Martii* 1657. declared under hand and Seal, in purſuan the ſaid Acts of Parliament, and revoked and annulled thoſe Deputations,) violently then, and 28. *Auguſt*, and ſeverall other times in 1656. with Souldiers armed, without any civil Officer, break open and enter *Bentley*'s Printery, and diſſeize him of ſeverall Inſtruments and materialls imployed in work upon Bible-printing on carrying them to Stationers Hall, and falſely and ſcandalouſly reporting, they were at work upon the Parliament of *Ladies*: And ſince the death of the late Protector 9. *Sept.* laſt, by pretext of a Warrant under the Privy Signet to ſearch for ſcandalous and unlicenſed News-Books and Pamphlets onely, dated 1. *Julii* alſo laſt paſt (in i then abſolutely void and ineffectuall by his Highneſs's death,) *Hills* and *Field* (with 8. or 10. Souldiers armed and ſwords drawn, no reſiſtance being made,) entred again to *Bentley*'s Printery, and forcibly carried away other like Materialls uſed in Bible-printing onely. Which Actions are not onely contrary to the ancient and fundame Laws and Liberties of the people, but an expreſſe Judgement in Parliament 27. *Octob.* 1641. (in the Caſe of *William Aſton* Printer, againſt the Company of Statione and the ſaid Acts for regulating of printing; and yet do they not ſurceaſe their menacing threats, out of their confidence in their great friends and purſe, (as is cred reported,) as if they were lawleſſe, and above the correction of all Authority.

This being the Caſe in fact, and the Common-wealth ſo much damnified and abuſed by *Hills* and *Field*'s monopolizing, and inhanſing the prices of their Bibles (the falſely and blaſphemouſly printed,) to exceſſive rates, ſuppreſſing and obſtructing *Bentley* under pretext of his printing their private Copy.

It is humbly propoſed for redreſſe,

I. *That the future printing of Bibles may no longer be tollerated to reſide in the hands of* Hills *and* Field *onely, as ſole* Proprietors *thereof, ſince that it intends ſo much to the diſho and dammage of the Common-wealth.*

II. *Nor let looſe to the extravagant liberty of all, or any of the Stationers Company (being Bookſellers or Binders, and no* Printers, *) as of late yeares it was, and is again by of them deſigned, and attempted; It being profit in exchange or ſale, and not the well-printing of a book, that they familiarly reſpect.*

III. *But that* Bentley *and his* Partners, *and ſuch other honeſt, able and careful Maſter-*Printers, *as merit the favour of his Highneſſe and the* Parliament, *(not exceeding ſome com number) may be hereafter delegated, and permitted, under their priviledge onely, to print the Bible, as in their grave wiſdomes (for good correction, workmanſhip, and price,) be requiſitely held meet. Which as is humbly conceived, will be the beſt method for the future ordering and accompliſhing that honourable and conſiderable work, notwithſtanding ſpecious pretences of any perſons to the contrary.*

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